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December 12, 2005

Commissioner Mike Barton
Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Dear Commissioner Barton:

Mike

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). As you know, the November 4th STIP release contains serious reductions to the Fairbanks Metropolitan Transportation System (FMATS) program due to the effect of project earmark funding on the STIP. This proposed funding shortfall would deter FMATS' ability to build and maintain essential transportation projects in the Fairbanks area.

In reading the overview, it states that written comments to the STIP must be submitted to your department by December 31, 2005. Given the recent developments regarding the bridge earmark funding in Congress in mid-November, I find it difficult to offer accurate commentary on the STIP until we see where the \$450 million in bridge earmark funding will be programmed. On this note, I request that you extend the public comment period at least 45 days to address this area of concern.

Upon further review, it looks like significant advance construction funding is used in the 2006 program year that will severely impact available program funding in 2007 and 2008. Please provide my office with the list of projects that utilize the advance construction funding mechanism for program year 2006.

I also request that your appropriate staff brief my staff and/or I on the draft STIP prior to the beginning of session this January 9th. If you have any questions, please call James Armstrong at 269-0127. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

Gary Wilken 6, 99A

Gary Wilken

GW/jja

cc: Mayor Steve Thompson, City of Fairbanks
Mayor Jim Whittaker, Fairbanks North Star Borough
Mayor Jeff Jacobson, City of North Pole
Senator Gene Therriault
Senator Ralph Seekins
House Interior Delegation Members
FMATS Policy Committee Members

